

RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

By ROBERT T. SEARS

THE TWO decades before and after Vatican Council II have been times of immense change. Doors have not only been opened to the 'hopes, griefs, and anxieties of our day' (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1), but to a host of areas connected with the Church's own institution and structures: doctrine, authority, papacy, church membership, infallibility, attitude towards the world.¹ What is there that has remained unquestioned? In this ferment there is a renewed search for identity; for no institution can exist that is uncertain why it exists and what its real meaning is. And yet we are also aware that our narrowly institutional understanding of the Church is what gave rise to the brittle and rigid identity that is not weathering the present storm. Where are we to turn?

Coupled with this shaking of familiar understandings, we have seen in the last half-century, and more specifically in the last two decades, a 'revival' of Spirit which, unlike similar previous revivals, has continued to develop. Since the year 1900, Churches devoted to the Spirit have so multiplied that, by 1970, it was estimated that there were about four million 'pentecostals', in the United States and between twelve and thirty-five million in the known world.² By 1970, it was generally conceded that 'the pentecostal Churches are almost certainly the fastest growing christian communities in the world'.³ Henry Van Dusen, former president of Union Theological Seminary in New York, called Pentecostalism a 'Third Force' in the Church, together with classical Protestantism and Catholicism.⁴ Moreover, in the last two decades, this re-awakening to the Holy Spirit has penetrated the denominational Churches. Initial reluctance to it was indicated by the early rejection of 'tongue-speaking' by the Episcopal Church of California (1960 and 1963) and by the American

¹ Cf Avery Dulles, *The Resilient Church* (New York, 1977).

² Cf Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1971), pp 214-15. ³ *Ibid.*, p 223.

⁴ Cf Henry P. Van Dusen, 'The Third Force', in *Life* (9 June 1958), pp 122-4.

Lutheran Church in 1963; but there has been an ever-increasing openness. The Catholic bishops of the United States began to open their minds to it with their still rather cautious statement in 1969, which was followed by the United Presbyterian Church in 1970, by the Lutheran Church in America in 1974, and with public theological recognition by the Catholic Canadian bishops in 1975.⁵ The late Pope Paul VI gave it modest approval in a private audience in 1973, and a more pronounced recognition in 1975, during the International Charismatic Conference in Rome. In 1897, Pope Leo XIII had expressed regret 'that Christians have but a meagre knowledge of the Holy Spirit';⁶ whilst in 1959, Pope John XXIII prayed for a 'New Pentecost' before Vatican II. Yet few would have guessed what would emerge after the Council.

What are we to make of this re-awakening to the Holy Spirit? Is it a response to our renewed search for identity in the Church? Or is it a passing phase, raising hopes with its sensationalism, but running the risk of leaving the Church more disillusioned when it should begin to fade? Is it an escape from informed commitment to social change, and a dangerous threat to the institutional aspects of the Church?⁷ Or is it rather an important challenge to some of the more familiar ideas about the organization and mission of the Church, and a clue to a new sense of identity?

This article will examine some of these issues in order to offer some guidelines for 'receiving the Holy Spirit': first by examining the present conditions of the movement; secondly by reviewing the seminal experience and cautionary advice in the New Testament; and finally by developing a more general theology of the Holy Spirit, in order to draw the implications for our own response today.

Present historical conditions

In attempting to understand the pentecostal movement, we might begin by examining present-day conditions. As the movement developed, both outside and within the denominational churches, a number of sociological and psychological studies attempted to identify the causes. Kilian McDonnell has recently analysed and

⁵ Cf Kilian McDonnell, *Charismatic Renewal and the Churches* (New York, 1976), pp 41-78.

⁶ Encyclical Letter, *Divinum Illud* (4 May 1897).

⁷ Dulles, *op. cit.*, pp 14-15, suggests that the small community movement had this divisive effect, and there is some indication of the same in the charismatic renewal, though the preponderance of evidence shows a renewed commitment to the Church.

evaluated these studies; and because he touches latent questions in many minds, it seems profitable to give an account of his findings.⁸

The studies based on the sociology of religious sects have grouped themselves around two theories: disorganization and deprivation. The first argues that immigrant rural fundamentalists became disoriented when moving to the cities, and that this disorientation was merely augmented by the impersonal institutional churches. Hence the immigrants were attracted to the small sect movement. The second asserts that social and economic deprivation leads to alienation from the Churches largely patronized by the middle-class, and hence to the formation of sects.⁹ While both theories have their value in interpreting the early days of the movement, they are equally inadequate. In the first place, other studies have shown that it is not social disorientation but recruitment by friends which is the main reason for the growth of the renewal.¹⁰ Secondly, the poorer classes do not tend to form sects of any kind whatever. Rather, they remain isolated, and tend to give less public institutional expression to religion than the more well-to-do.¹¹ Further, in the last two decades, membership in the movement has come from a cross-section of classes. It also seems that loyalty to the Church, evidenced by participation in church activities and high Mass attendance, predisposes individuals towards the movement.¹²

Psychological theories have also run into difficulties. With the emergence of 'tongue-speaking', outside observers offered theories of 'emotional abnormality', 'proclivity to dependency', or simply 'learned behaviour'.¹³ Further controlled studies, however, have found that pentecostal glossolalics, while perhaps from more disturbed backgrounds, were no more disturbed than control groups, nor more subject to suggestion.¹⁴ The further fact that some originally spoke in tongues before joining a group argued against both the 'dependency' and 'learned behaviour' theories.¹⁵ In addition, participants during the last decade have come from a broad spectrum of educational and economic backgrounds which could hardly be called 'disturbed' or 'unconventional'.¹⁶ These inconclusive findings of both sociology and psychology point towards the need for adequate theological investigation.

⁸ McDonnell, *ibid.* ⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 20-31. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 32. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p 33. ¹² *Ibid.*, pp 37-38.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp 79-109. Cutten (1927) and Boisen (1936, 1939, 1945) put forward the first interpretation; Kildahl (1972) is the main representative of the second; and Felicitas Goodman (University of Chicago, 1972) argued the third.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, esp pp 90-93. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 107-09; 130-8. ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p 147.

New Testament witness

The ambiguity of these cultural studies leads us back to the primary 'awakening to the Spirit' in the early Church, to see what light it sheds on our present-day experience.

First, there is evidence on almost every page of the New Testament that the early Church was pervaded by 'Spirit'. The Spirit-bearer *par excellence* was Jesus himself; for he was seen as inaugurating the fulfilment of God's end-time (eschatological) promise.¹⁷ Ezechiel had prophesied that in the end-time God would put his own Spirit in their hearts and make them keep his laws (Ezek 36, 27). Joel (3, 1) also saw the outpouring of the Spirit on all humankind as sign of this end-time; a point that did not escape Luke in his account of Pentecost (Acts 2, 16ff). The baptismal accounts, common to all the synoptic Gospels, testify to Jesus's anointing by the eschatological Spirit; the promise is fulfilled in him. John's baptism itself was eschatological: a preparation for the one who would come after to baptize with 'Spirit and fire' (Mt 3, 11; Lk 3, 16), and thus inaugurate the Kingdom.¹⁸ There was no one born of woman greater than the Baptist, 'yet the least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he' (Mt 11, 11). Thus, when the Spirit rested on Jesus at his baptism, it was seen as the beginning of God's eschatological rule. In the Spirit Jesus experienced a unique relation of 'Sonship' ('Abba'); and he was led (or driven — Mark) into the desert to be purified for his mission. In the Spirit he was empowered to heal (Lk 4, 16-21; cf Isai 61, 1ff) to exorcize 'by the Spirit (finger) of God' (Mt 12, 28; Lk 11, 20), to teach with authority, to give his life on the cross (Mark), and confer the Spirit on his disciples (Luke, Acts and John).¹⁹ Modern scholars now generally concede that Jesus cannot be considered apart from a theology of the Spirit, As Walter Kasper writes: 'the mediation between God and man in Jesus Christ can be understood theologically only as an event 'in the Holy Spirit'.²⁰ He was not just an individual, but one anointed by God for the people, in continuity with Israel's history.

As with Jesus, so with 'Christians'. They cannot be considered apart from their 'anointing' by the Spirit. The pauline writings are our earliest reports of this view of the Church. In 1 Cor 12, 13, Paul

¹⁷ James Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (Philadelphia, 1975) argues this point (e.g. on pp 42-43), as does C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition* (London, 1947), esp pp 25-45.

¹⁸ See Barrett, *op. cit.*, pp 26-39.

¹⁹ See Dunn, *op. cit.*, chs 2, 3 and 4, where he considers the religious experience of Jesus as an experience of the Spirit of God.

²⁰ *Jesus the Christ* (New York, 1976), p 249.

writes: 'it was in one Spirit that all of us, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, were baptized into one body'. And in Romans (8, 9) he makes the general statement, 'anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him'. In the Spirit, as adopted children, we say 'Abba', Father (Rom 8, 15; Gal 4, 6); and we experience an equally intimate relationship to 'Jesus as Lord' (1 Cor 12, 3). This same Spirit unites us with all believers, and endows us 'for the common good' (1 Cor 12, 7), for the building up of the one Body.

Like Paul, Luke (both in Gospel and Acts: the favourite texts of charismatics) is explicit about the role of the Spirit in the Church. The same Spirit that had empowered Jesus's life and works (cf Lk 4, 18ff) was promised to the disciples (cf Lk 24, 49; Acts 1, 4-5) and actually conferred as they were praying together at Pentecost (Acts 2, 1ff). In Acts, Luke draws the parallel between Peter and Paul and Jesus, in order to show that the disciples performed the same works as Jesus; and the one Spirit is revealed in the united adherence of the community to 'the instruction of the apostles, the communal life, to the breaking of bread and the prayers' (Acts 2, 42).

The evidence is clear. Both Jesus and the early Church are seen as inspired and led by God's own creative Spirit: the Spirit of the end-time, who builds them into one body by gifts. As James Dunn concludes in his study of conversion-initiation in the early Church: 'The essence of New Testament Christianity was an experience of receiving the Spirit — an experience closely connected with hearing the Word, a reception manifested in eschatological power'.²¹ Small wonder that many have recently argued that the Church is 'charismatic', a continuing work of God's Spirit.²²

Early apostolic problems

'Given such an ideal beginning, whence the need for a re-emergence of the Spirit?' A closer look at the New Testament shows that the Church, as ideally portrayed in Acts, was not without its conflicts; and these difficulties led to increasing institutionalization. Paul's letters to the Corinthians and Colossians are the first to mention these conflicts. The Corinthians were a gifted community (1 Cor 1, 7), but torn by factions (1 Cor 1, 10-17). Paul did not want to suppress these spiritual gifts (cf 1 Cor 14, 1ff), but he made it clear that the 'more excellent way' was that of love (1 Cor 12, 31), for

²¹ James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London, 1970), p 223.

²² E.g., Hans Küng, 'The Charismatic Structure of the Church', in *Concilium* 4, pp 41-62.

the building up of the community (1 Cor 14). This was the touchstone of the true Spirit of Christ. The Colossians had to cope with a different problem: a fascination for angelic powers that separated them from the headship of Christ.²³ Thus, in a baptismal passage in his letter to this community (cf Col 2, 11-15), Paul speaks of incorporation into Christ; whereas elsewhere he had contrasted circumcision and baptism as flesh and spirit (cf Phil 3, 3), or coupled baptism with an exhortation to 'walk in the spirit' (Gal 5, 22). From a very early date then, over-emphasis on 'spiritual experience' threatened to divide the community and separate it from its centre in Christ.

A similar danger is touched upon in the matthean Gospel, which was addressed to a divided community.²⁴ This community no longer enjoyed the sort of esteem of fellow-Jews mentioned by Luke in Acts 2, 27; nor was the Church at peace (Acts 9, 31). The roman destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. successfully dismembered every jewish group except the Pharisees and the Christians; whilst the Synod of Pharisaic Rabbis, held at Jamnia (thirteen miles south of Jaffa) about 100 A.D., determined to rid itself of any christian ties. Christian discipleship became a costly matter, 'the pearl of great price' (Mt 13, 45-46). As charity grew cold (cf 24, 13), with consequent divisions over prophetic leadership (cf 17, 15; 24, 11), the 'false prophets' became an important issue for the first evangelist; they were to come, not just in the end-time (cf 24, 11. 24), but here and now, 'in sheep's clothing' (7, 15); that is, as fellow-christians. They were to be judged 'by their fruits' (7, 16-20), not by their power of prophecy, casting out of demons, or other mighty works, but by 'doing the will of my Father in heaven' (7, 21-23): that is, by works of love, as the great judgment scene asserts (cf Mt 25, 31-46). Since 'Spirit' can be misinterpreted to refer to works of power separate from love, Matthew (like Paul before him) re-emphasizes this essential point.

The evangelist's resolution of this crisis is an exhortation to return to the substantial: the words of Jesus, the authority of the first disciples and their successors, reconciliation in community, and a more flexible outlook concerning the mission to the Gentiles.

²³ Cf George T. Montague s.m., *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (New York, 1976), p 218.

²⁴ Cf Eugene A. Laverdière s.s.s. and William G. Thompson s.j., 'New Testament Communities in Transition: a Study of Matthew and Luke', in *Theological Studies*, 37 (December 1976), pp 571-74; also Montague, *op. cit.*, pp 302-10.

Jesus's words are the firm rock on which the Church must build (cf Mt 7, 24-27). They fulfil the old law, which still has validity (cf 5, 17-18; 23, 2-3; 24, 20); but only when interpreted as Jesus does, by pointing to the primacy of charity (9, 13; 12, 7; 18, 22). Further, the authority of the Church, and of the apostles and their successors to bind and to loose (cf 16, 19; 18, 18), assures contact with Jesus the rock through Peter the rock (16, 18-19) and his successors (since Peter was presumably dead).²⁵ This re-established identity in Jesus and the leaders' authority, together with forgiving reconciliation, would empower them to look beyond the community to the 'whole world' (28, 19), so as to proclaim the universal lordship of Jesus.²⁶

Mark is a final witness to early problems. For him, the extreme danger was the roman persecution; and the ultimate manifestation of Spirit is fidelity to a martyr's death.²⁷ Though his superscription is 'the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God' (Mk 1, 1), throughout his gospel he insists that the spirit world alone can recognize Jesus as Son of God.²⁸ His mission as Messiah is hidden; for though the words of recognition, 'Thou art my beloved Son', are spoken to him at his baptism in the Jordan (cf Mk 1, 11), and in spite of the transfiguration (9, 2-8), the exorcisms (3, 19-30) and the healings through his own power, the disciples do not understand. Peter confesses the truth through God's gift (8, 57); but at once he shows how he has missed the point entirely. The first to acknowledge Jesus as 'Son of God' is the centurion beneath the cross (15, 39). As Montague comments, for Mark, 'what distinguishes the Son of God from other pneumatics is that he, unlike them, has come to serve to the extent of giving his life for the ransom of the many (10, 45). Martyrdom, not miracles, is the touchstone of the Spirit'.²⁹

These cautionary statements and hints of Paul, Matthew and Mark all point in a common direction. The Spirit is not just divine power; it is God's gracious love revealed in the committed servant-love of Jesus, who builds community with recognized leadership, respects the past (the law) while opening to the future (the freedom of God's forgiveness), and confirms the witness to God's love even unto death. The johannine Letters and Gospel bring these reflections into a kind of synthesis.³⁰ John's first letter tells believers that the

²⁵ See Montague, *op. cit.*, p 303. ²⁶ Cf Laverdière and Thompson, *op. cit.*, esp pp 475-6.

²⁷ See Montague's interpretation, pp 237-52.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p 247.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p 252.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 333-65. No attempt is made here to affirm common authorship of the Johannine Letters and Gospel. It is sufficient to see them as products of the same school.

anointing of God 'remains in your hearts . . . and teaches you about all things' (1 Jn 2, 27). The Spirit is not merely 'free', but continuous: the sign of God's dwelling in them (1 Jn 4, 13). It is tested by whether one confesses Jesus as the Son of God (1 Jn 2, 27; 4, 2; 4, 15), whether one acknowledges John's (and the disciples') authority (1, 3; 4, 6), and whether one loves the believers and remains in community (4, 7-21, etc.). A similar teaching is found in his Gospel. We must be born again of water and the Spirit (Jn 3, 4), and remain in union with Christ and one another (15, 1-17, etc.): states which also mean union with the Father (17, 21). The final sign of the Spirit, its source and revelation, is the serving love revealed in Jesus's death on the cross (10, 11; 13, 34-35; 19, 30), which will bring them persecution, just as it did for Jesus himself (15, 18-16, 4). His self-surrender on the cross purifies believers and forms them into a community, commissioned in the Spirit to extend this forgiving love to others (Jn 20, 21-23).

The eventual outcome

The witness of Scripture clearly affirms that the Church is grounded in the Spirit; but it also stresses the need to discern the true Spirit from the false. The criteria of this discernment are faith in Jesus and his teaching, attention to recognized authority, loving service of one another, and witnessing in the world to God's love even unto death. These criteria are not meant to suppress the gifts of the Spirit: tongues, prophecy, healing, and other works of faith. Paul presupposes them (cf 1 Cor 14, 1ff); and John expected their continuance, as 'even greater works' (Jn 14, 12).³¹ The Church expected them to accompany those who believe, as the canonical ending of Mark testifies (Mk 16, 17-18). Nor was there any separation of institution from charism; for administration itself was seen as a gift of the Spirit (1 Cor 12, 28; Rom 12, 8), whilst unity with leadership was essential to the message. Gesché accurately portrays the situation when he writes:

The Gospel is a message to be lived, not only on the individual level but also as a society, as a Church: and thus in some degree in a manner that is institutional. For there will always be institutions wherever men aspire to live not only as individuals, but also as a body,

³¹ Brown comments that the 'greater' in John's account refers to the 'eschatological character' of the works. Their mission is 'to bring a share in Jesus's life to others (bear fruit: 15, 16)'. See *The Gospel according to John* (New York, 1970), vol 2, p 633.

the Body of Christ. The presence of the institutional dimension does not merely respond to some sociological necessity; it is the expression of a message which demands to be lived out communally.³²

Despite the affirmations of Scripture, what actually happened was emphasis on institution to the neglect of spiritual gifts. Several reasons have been given for this: the rise of Montanism and the Church's reaction to it, the establishment of Christianity as a state religion after Constantine, the general cooling of fervour when persecution ceased, the return to Old Testament structures as Christianity developed its own independence. But whatever the cause, the Church at large ceased to expect to be endowed with spiritual gifts such as healing, tongues and prophecy. They became the property of special groups (such as monks and religious orders), and chosen individuals (such as saints).³³ The main body of the Church took on an institutional aspect which looked more like the legalism which Jesus had confronted in Israel than the 'freedom of worship in Spirit and truth' spoken of by John (cf 4, 23-4). As a result, we are faced today with the challenge not merely to set the gifts of the Spirit in their right order, but to recover them. The question is how to 'receive the Holy Spirit' while avoiding the pitfalls revealed by history.

A theology of the Holy Spirit

The New Testament presents solutions suitable to its own times and circumstances. If we are to draw out the implications for today, we need a more coherent, general theory. This was the actual process of doctrinal development, and it is as necessary for us today as it was at any point in the Church's history. We need to ask what view of the Spirit is implied in what has been said, in order to determine how we can best co-operate with the Spirit in today's Church. Space prevents more than a brief indication of the basic elements.

Of central importance for a doctrine of Spirit is that the Holy Spirit is God's Spirit, and hence eschatological. The first Council

³² See his 'Mutation religieuse et renouvellement théologique', in *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 4 (1973), pp 296-97. Quoted in Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* (New York, 1975), p 27.

³³ Morton Kelsey, in *Healing and Christianity* (New York, 1973), pp 184-85, traces this idea to Augustine's early position that the extraordinary gifts like tongues and healing were for the early Church, whereas the charism of unity was what was required for his day. Augustine later changed his position, after he had discovered seventy healings in his own time; his earlier opinion was what influenced the tradition.

of Constantinople (381 A.D.) affirms that the Spirit is 'equally worshipped' with the Father and the Son. The Spirit is not defined by our experience, but rather gives rise to our experience according to eternal divine origin. This is clear from what has been said about the scriptural view of the Holy Spirit as eschatological (end-time) promise. Any 'new Pentecost' must, therefore, begin with God, with the Church an open and praying recipient, rather than by limiting the Spirit to the Church. Ultimately, the Church remains a 'mystery', hidden in God, of the indwelling Spirit (cf *Lumen Gentium*, 1, 8).

Secondly, if the Spirit is God's Spirit, can we gain some understanding of the Spirit in God, and not simply in our experience? The history of doctrine shows a divergence here between the greek and latin traditions; but recent developments may lead to an integration of the two views. The greek tradition views the Father as the one Source, in order to explain the unity of the divine activity, with the Son and Spirit as it were 'the two hands of God' (Irenaeus), working together in all God's action in creation and redemption.³⁴ As Walter Kasper puts it, the Spirit is the freedom of God's love flowing through the Son to all creation, the head of which is Christ, and bringing back all creation through Christ to the one source in the Father.³⁵ This tradition takes seriously the biblical view that from beginning to end, from birth to death, Christ's life was united to the Spirit.³⁶

The latin view, on the other hand, is more ecclesial. It sees the Spirit as expressing the love of Father and Son, springing from Father and Son as from one principle. This is a more communitarian model: the Father and Son are seen as two independent principles joined together as a common principle of their love.³⁷

Recent developments, focusing on the death of Christ as the perfect revelation and 'freeing' of the Spirit among us, can perhaps point to a reconciliation of these two views.³⁸ The ever-transcendent

³⁴ Cf J. D. Zizioulas, 'The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church', in *Communio*, 1 (1974), pp 142-58, esp p 143. ³⁵ Kasper, *op. cit.*, pp 251, 253. ³⁶ Zizioulas, *op. cit.*, p 145.

³⁷ Cf The Second Council of Lyons (A.D. 1274) — Denzinger Schönmetzer, 850; and the Council of Florence (A.D. 1439) *ibid.*, 1300. The *filioque* controversy between East and West well illustrates this distinction. Cf Edmund J. Fortman, *The Triune God* (Philadelphia, 1972), pp 93-95, 224-30, 275-83. Since the dispute regards the unity of God and God's action, a deeper understanding of personal self-gift as God's being may help to satisfy the concerns of both sides.

³⁸ Luther's paradoxical theology of the suffering of the Father has more recently gained widespread attention by various authors (see von Balthasar, H. Mühlen, J. Moltman, E. Jüngel, etc.). For further development and references, see my 'Trinitarian Love as Ground of the Church', in *Theological Studies*, 37 (1976), pp 652-79, esp p 658, note 22.

overflowing love of the greek tradition and the community-forming love of the latin tradition come together on the cross; for the dying of Christ frees the Spirit of divine love to all the world, yet also forms the disciples into a community of serving love. Recent thinking sees the Father involved in this self-giving. The Father's freedom to love is revealed in his surrendering his Son on the cross (cf Jn 3, 16), and the Son corresponds with his own free self-surrender (cf Jn 10, 17-18); and their joint self-gift sends and reveals the Holy Spirit as the overflowing freedom of God's love in person, ever more deeply uniting believers with Christ's Body, whilst simultaneously reaching out to all the world.³⁹ The scriptural emphasis on love and unity in community is thus taken seriously, as well as the openness of the Spirit to universality and creative freedom, to 'blow where it wills' (Jn 3, 8). The Spirit thus continues God's reconciling love, progressively uniting all things in Christ for their return to the Father (cf 1 Cor 15, 25-28).

Thirdly, a renewed theology of Mary as most perfect embodiment of the Spirit supports this view of the Spirit as reconciling love. If the Spirit is the total 'yes' of God's self-giving love overflowing in the Church for the world, then in Mary we can see the image of the renewed Church, the perfect 'receiver of the Spirit'. Exegetically, we know very little for certain about the 'historical' Mary, at least in the opinion of Raymond Brown;⁴⁰ but here we have the interesting implication that the New Testament accounts, especially Luke and John, are themselves theology: a theology of the Church as receiving Christ into itself.⁴¹ Luke contrasts Mary, 'the daughter of Sion', with the Old Testament figure, Zechariah. Unlike him, she receives Christ in her own body, just as the Church itself is the temple of the Spirit. She is poor (of the *anawim*), yet she says 'yes' through the gift of the Spirit; 'yes' despite her virginity to God's surprising ways against all human expectations; 'yes' to separation from Jesus and surrendering him to the Father (as in the Finding in the Temple cf Lk 2, 41-52); and a final 'yes' to his actual death on the cross, forgiving sinners. Her sharing this suffering opened for her (as for the Church) the hearts of many: a sign of God's universal forgiveness.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 658-60.

⁴⁰ Cf R. Brown, 'The Meaning of Modern New Testament Studies for an Ecumenical Understanding of Mary', in *Crises Facing the Church* (New York, 1975), pp 84-108.

⁴¹ The 'daughter of Sion' theme is frequent in the Old Testament (cf Zeph 3, 14; Zech 2, 10; Isai 62, 11 etc.). Max Thurian, in *Mary: Mother of the Lord, Figure of the Church* (London, 1963), develops the exegesis of Luke at some length.

John's theology of Mary gives another perspective on the same truth. He sees her as the 'New Eve', the image of one transformed by Jesus from Old Testament expectation to the New Testament faith and partnership with him.⁴² At Cana, the 'first sign' (Jn 2, 11), she is initially named as distinct from Jesus and the disciples, and expects an Old Testament type of miracle; but she is brought to deeper faith in Jesus as the One who decides (Jn 2, 5). This decision is the occasion of the New Testament transformation and the sign of the Eucharist; and finally she leaves the scene *with* Jesus and the disciples (2, 12). This initial foreshadowing is brought to fulfilment in her second entry, at the foot of the cross (Jn 19, 26-30). She again exemplifies the expectant faith, which stands firm despite persecution and the cross; and in Jesus's dying, she and the beloved disciple receive his Spirit, which signifies the creation of a new family, as John takes her 'into his own home'.⁴³ Heribert Mühlen has argued that this final acceptance of Jesus's atoning death by Mary, which implied accepting her own death, was the ultimate sign of the Spirit. It freed Mary to a new community-relationship in the Spirit, and later freed the disciples to community and mission.⁴⁴ In both Luke and John, Mary stands for the Church as well as for herself. In saying 'yes' to Jesus's atoning death, she co-operates in the Spirit's creation of a new family of faith, a community of continuing reconciliation (cf Jn 20, 22-23).

Receiving the Holy Spirit

Our theology of the Holy Spirit has led us to see the third Person as God's freeing gift of love which reconciles us in community and opens us to extend God's love to others. Response to the Spirit begins, as with Mary, with a 'yes' to God's love, and is most fully revealed through fidelity to this reconciliation, unto death if need be. What directives emerge, from this view, for the Church's co-operation with the Spirit today?

First, it should not surprise us that the Spirit is manifested outside institutional structures, even though ultimately orientated to community. For the Spirit, like the wind, 'blows where it wills' (Jn 3, 8), since it expresses the very freedom of God's love. This was Jesus's teaching in his own time, when he confronted the self-com-

⁴² Cf Thurian, *op. cit.*, ch 9, 'Mary and the Church'.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp 159-66. Brown is in basic agreement with Thurian's view here.

⁴⁴ Cf H. Mühlen, 'New Trends in Mariology', in *Theology Digest*, 24 (1976), pp 286-92.

placent righteousness of his own people. In Matthew, the owner of the vineyard says to the workers: 'I am free to do as I please with my money, am I not? Or are you envious because I am generous? Thus the last shall be first and the first shall be last' (Mt 20, 15-16). We need to be helped to break out of our narrow expectations, if we are to see the whole world as God's mission to love.

Secondly, it should not surprise us that today we are seeing again the 'works' of the Spirit on a much wider front. The view which restricted such works to the early Church very likely began with Augustine; it finds little support in Scripture. What we can say, however, is that these works (such as healing, exorcism, prophecy, etc.) are for the sake of service in community, and for freeing people to perform such service. As in Mark,⁴⁵ and later in John, the healings are signs that God's Kingdom is breaking in: ultimately, a Kingdom of serving love and witness to the world.

Thirdly, it follows that the Spirit is not divisive or triumphalistic, but self-giving and forgiving. Paul taught this lesson to the Corinthians, who were torn by misdirected enthusiasm; and it remains a necessity for all who would be open to the Spirit. The mark of Jesus's Spirit is summed up by John — 'your love for one another' (Jn 13, 35); and the measure of this love is Jesus's death on the cross. As Mark's gospel affirms, martyrdom is the clearest sign of the Spirit, which, translated into community terms, could mean commitment unto death to God's faithful covenant love.⁴⁶ Those acquainted with the renewal will know how difficult is the living out of this truth. The history of pentecostal Churches has been marked with divisions, as have the renewals in the denominational Churches. These have not been due just to the 'charismatics'; but one cannot avoid noticing a tendency to a triumphalism ('we are the saved') which scarcely reveals the merciful love of God in Jesus. It was he who refused to abandon his people, even though they put him to death.

Fourthly, I have argued elsewhere that such unconditional love demands that one experience healing and forgiveness oneself.⁴⁷ Healing, especially inner healing, is not an optional accessory. It is an indispensable condition of building community and extending God's reconciliation. One cannot open one's heart to others without trust; and one cannot trust where there are hurts from

⁴⁵ Cf G. Montague, *op. cit.*, p 248.

⁴⁶ Cf R. Sears, 'Trinitarian Love . . .', for a further development of this idea.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p 668. Also, Robert T. Sears S.J., 'The Ministry of Healing', in *Emmanuel*, 84 (1978), pp 234-43, which provides further references on healing.

one's parents, from the Church, or simply from those experiences in life when one did risk opening up. Jesus's unconditional trust in his Father's love on the cross, despite failure, rejection and pain, reveals and makes possible in his Spirit a similar trust and healing of hurts which have turned one in on oneself rather than outward.

Forgiveness builds on such healing. As we experience God's forgiving love for ourselves, we can let go of those demands we made of others that gave rise to unforgiveness. The creativity of God's Spirit can make up for the lack of love resulting from broken relationships, and thus free us to release from our unforgiveness those who have hurt us. God loved us 'when we were God's enemies' (Rom 5, 10), and thus bridged the chasm that separated us from him. As we open our hearts to that healing, and come to give ourselves, we are freed, as was Paul, to extend the call to reconciliation to others (cf 2 Cor 5, 20-21).

Finally, as healed and forgiven, the Church is called to reveal God's Spirit as overflowing love. The very mark of the Spirit is freedom to love, not only if and when the love is reciprocated, but as an unconditional gift. In Christ, God broke the hostility dividing Jew and Gentile and put enmity to death on the cross (cf Eph 2, 11-22). God's Spirit is already at work in all the world, opening the eyes of believers to new revelations of God not yet realized in the Church, as well as to opportunities to help the world find the divine ground of its own hopes. The Spirit opens believers to hope and to believe in creative love, even with darkness all around.⁴⁸ This renewal of faith in the expectation of God's wonders is one of the special gifts of the re-birth of the Spirit today. Jesus believed in God's reconciling love even when everything pointed to the contrary, and thus made it a reality for us. The Church will continue his work in so far as it also learns to believe unconditionally that 'nothing is impossible with God' (Lk 1, 27; Mt 19, 26), and thus make re-creation a possibility for the world. So the Spirit releases us from the slavery of sin (Jn 8, 34) to the freedom of God, which enables us to free others. 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (Jn 20, 22-23).

⁴⁸ Cf Suenens, *A New Pentecost?*, pp 9-13.